**Unit 3 – Cold War Crises: Berlin, Cuba and Czechoslovakia 1957-69**

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**1961 The Berlin Crisis**

**Background: ‘Peaceful Co-existence’ under strain**

In the 1950s the communist regimes in Eastern Europe erected border defences between their countries and those of the West to halt the flow of refugees leaving the East in search of a better life in the capitalist West. Forced collectivization and a ban on private trading were not popular policies.

By 1959 Khrushchev felt he needed to adopt a firmer line with the West. He was under some criticism for his actions towards Eastern Europe- some ‘hardliners’ in the Kremlin blamed him for the problems in Poland and Hungary. The Chinese [angry at Soviet blocks on nuclear technology] wanted the USSR to adopt a tougher stance with the West. Khrushchev also felt emboldened by the launch of the first ICBM in 1957- Sputnik.

In 1958 Khrushchev made certain demands on the West which aimed at making Berlin a neutral city:

* That they recognize the GDR
* That they withdraw troops from West Berlin
* That they hand over their access routes to West Berlin to the GDR government.

Khrushchev threatened to hand over East Berlin to the GDR in his bid to make the city neutral. Talks were set for the Paris meeting in May 1960.

**U2 spy-incident, May 1st 1960**



But on 1st May a high altitude reconnaissance plane- the U2 - was shot down over Soviet territory. U2s were used to spy on Soviet missile bases. Khrushchev demanded a US apology for the violation of their airspace. Eisenhower cancelled further flights but refused to apologize. Khrushchev walked out of the Paris summit.

**Kennedy and Khrushchev**

In June 1961 Khrushchev met the newly elected President Kennedy at the Vienna summit. Khrushchev repeated his demands that western troops withdraw from West Berlin. He felt he could bully the young and inexperienced president. Kennedy was determined to ‘get tough’ too. He rejected Khrushchev’s demands and furthermore ordered a massive increase in US military spending by $3 billion per year.

***We cannot and will not permit the communists to drive us out of Berlin, either gradually or by force. There is peace in Berlin today. The source of trouble and tension is Moscow, not Berlin. We seek peace but we will not surrender.***

JFK radio speech, July 1961

* **Read Waugh and Wright pages 49-51**

**East German refugees crossing the border:**

1. 129,245
2. 197,778
3. 165, 648
4. 182,393
5. 331,390
6. 184,198
7. 252,870
8. 279,189
9. 261,622
10. 204,092
11. 143,917
12. 199,188
13. 207,026
14. 21,356
15. 42,632

41,876

***1. Why was the Berlin Wall built in August 1961?***

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**Focus On: The Berlin Wall**

*********Building the Wall***

***East Berliner shot dead trying the escape***

***Potsdamer Platz***



The large construction site of the Berlin Wall was a complex, continuously changing, always impenetrable barrier, that consisted of a wide death strip with numerous barrier and watch elements.  
  
Depending on the position in the Berlin city area, the width of the border line varied. In exposed places like the Potsdamer Platz the border line extended from the normally about 70 meters to 500 meters. On the East-Berlin side before the actual border line was a barred area, where only especially authorised people were allowed to live or work. The crossing into the barred area was marked with signs in four languages the inscription "Border area - prohibited to walk and drive" and as well with red and white barrier railings and posts.

The approximately three meters high so called hinterland securing wall served, seen from the East, as the first firm barrier element of the border line and hindered at the same time the view onto the death strip. As "markings" the eastern side of the hinterland Wall was painted with large white rectangular fields with a grey framing. The side that pointed to the death strip was white, in order that people on flight could be seen better in the dark. At some sectors instead of the hinterland Wall were border securing fences made of traction metal.

The first element in the dead strip was the electrical border signalling fence of two to three meters height, that triggered alarm through touching. The signalling fence was followed by different surface barriers, like mats of steel spikes or tank traps made of x-shaped welded together railway tracks. This was followed by a two meter wide control strip, the so called K 2. With its raked sand surface that served for the reading of flight tracks, some places had guard dogs patrolling. The watchtowers were situated about in the middle of the border line, and had a free round view over the entire area. After the watchtower area followed the patrol track made of asphalt or concrete slabs. It served as a traffic path within the border system, the border posts patrolled on it and the soldiers were brought to the post segment. After that, lighting of street lamps followed, to light a second six meter wide control strip - the K 6. In some segments the lamps were situated already in front of the patrol track. The K 6 was made of raked sand and access was only allowed for authorised border soldiers, normally Officer patrols. Just like the K 2, K 6 also served for securing of flight tracks. Shortly in front of the border wall was situated the so called Kfz(vehicle)-barrier ditch, which in Berlin had been replaced often due to lack of space by tank traps. The barrier ditch and tank traps should inhibit a breaking through the border with heavy vehicles.

**Brandenburg Gate**

  
The furthest barrier element of the border wall in Berlin was a four meter high concrete slab wall with a round tube on top. This was the last obstacle for a fugitive, and served after all to hinder the view from the West into the death strip. The border wall stood not directly on the sector border, which was identical with the city district borders. The East-Berlin territory between the sector border and the border wall was called by the border soldiers "Feindwärtsgebiet" (area towards the enemy).  
  
In the 28 years between the building of the Wall (13th of August 1961) and the fall of the Wall (9th of November 1989) the border fortification have permanently been changed, enlarged and "perfected". In the night of the 12th to the 13th August in 1961, at first the troops of the Peoples- and Border Police as well as the troops of the GDR-army started to build barriers of barbed wire on the demarcation line in the city centre and began in the following days with the building of the Wall and the border fortifications. This first Wall around Berlin was two meter high, from different building materials assembled ruff building. The foundations consisted of large quadratic block elements, which originated from residential building. Above this ground construction smaller cavity blocks were laid and finally long concrete beams were laid on top. In the concrete beams Y-shaped iron support were included as holder for barbed wire. A short time later at some border sections massive concrete barriers replaced this Wall.  
  
From the middle of the 1960s, a new Wall generation was introduced, which replaced successively the old, very martial appearing building. It consisted of concrete slabs that were laid between H-shaped steel concrete supports. A round, 0,40 meter large concrete tube that served as a capping on the wall, which should make climbing over more difficult.

**Checkpoint Charlie**

The last Wall generation, the so called "Grenzmauer 75", was being built like the name implies from the middle of the 1970s and consisted of approximately 3.60 metres high and 1.20 metres wide L-shaped containing wall elements, that originated from the agriculturally used silage buildings. Also they ended at the top in a rounded concrete tube. In the 1980, the GDR planed a further "improvement" of the border system. The so called border fortification 90 should up date the existing border system of the "Grenzmauer 75" electronically by sensors, Infra red barriers, vibration- and signaling sensors as well as automatic search lights. However, before the execution of this "High-Tech-Border", the state and with it its border fortifications collapsed.

* **Read Waugh and Wright pages 53-54**

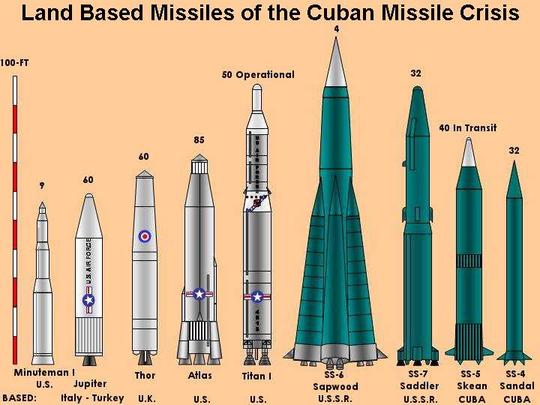
***2. What was the impact of the Berlin crisis?***

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Effects on Germany | Effects on the USSR | Effects on Superpower relations |
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**What is your initial reaction to this headline?**

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**Cold War Confrontation- Cuba**

[**http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/coldwar/G5/cs2/default.htm**](http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/coldwar/G5/cs2/default.htm)

[](http://www.atomicarchive.com/Reports/Cuba/index.shtml)



**DVD Questions**

1. Why was Cuban seen as ‘America’s playground’ in the 1940s and 1950s?
2. Who owned most of the land in Cuba before the 1959 revolution?
3. What was the name of the America-backed brutal right wing dictator of Cuba before 1959?
4. When Fidel Castro enter Havana to take over the government?
5. Why did 1000s flee the Cuban Revolution to America?
6. What did Castro begin nationalising after the revolution in 1959?
7. Why did Castro nationalise the foreign owned oil refineries?
8. How did the USA under Eisenhower respond to Cuba’s acts of nationalisation?
9. What acts of CIA sabotage occurred?
10. Where did the CIA train Cuban exiles prior to the Cuban invasion?
11. How did Kennedy limit US involvement in the approach to the Bay of Pigs invasion?
12. Why was the Bay of Pigs invasion a disaster for the exiles?
13. How did the USA try to threaten Castro following the failure of the Bay of Pigs?
14. Where did the USA deploy SRBMs in 1962?
15. When did missiles first arrive in Cuba?
16. How many Russian personnel were placed in Cuba?
17. When was JFK informed about missiles in Cuba?
18. Why did the missiles in Cuba give the USSR a first strike capability?
19. What four options were debated by Ex-Com [JFK’s emergency committee]?
20. An air strike on the missiles was likened to which other famous air-strike in History?
21. Why did JFK and Bobby [RFK] rule out such an air-strike?
22. How did Dobrynin [Soviet ambassador] justify the action of putting missiles on Cuba?
23. What policy did JFK decide to implement towards Cuba?
24. Why was this decision a dangerous strategy?
25. In the event of a conventional US invasion of Cuba what would have happened?
26. What did Khrushchev offer in his first telegram?
27. What did Khrushchev demand in his second telegram?
28. What did RFK suggest was the best way to deal with the second telegram?
29. How did RFK negotiate an end to the problem with Dobrynin?
30. How did Khrushchev announce his acceptance of the US agreement?

**Causes of the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962**

* **Read Waugh and Wright pages 56-60**

***1. Why was the USA so concerned about Castro’s revolution in Cuba, 1959-61?***

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**Castro and Khrushchev meet at the UN, 196**

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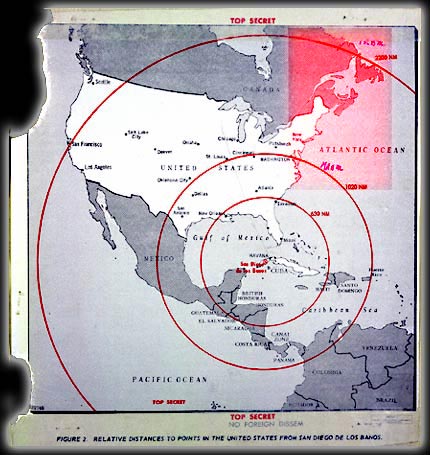
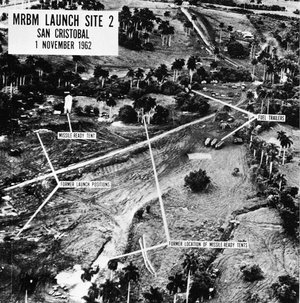
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***2. Why did Khrushchev place missiles in Cuba?***

[](http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/coldwar/G5/cs2/s1_t.htm)

**U2 spy plane photograph showing missile site under construction Official US map of missile ranges**

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**Consequences of the Crisis**

* **Read Waugh and Wright pages 61-63**

***4. How was the crisis resolved by Kennedy?***

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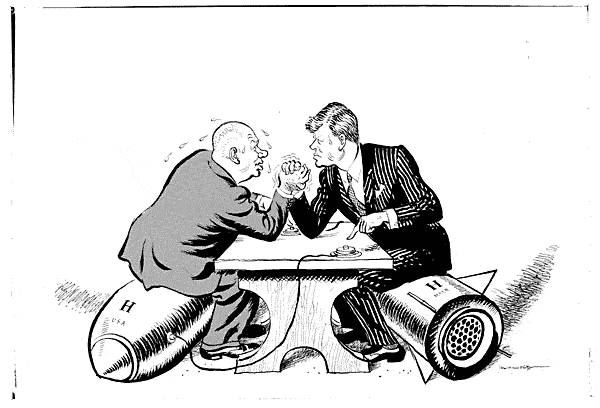
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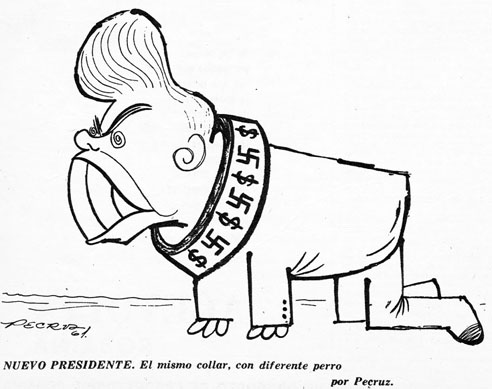
***5. What were the results of the crisis?***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Short term consequences** | **Impact on Personalities of:**   1. **Kennedy** 2. **Khrushchev** |  |
| **Impact on Cuba** |  |
| **Reaction of China** |  |
| **Reaction of Europe** |  |
| **Long term consequences** | **Impact on East-West relations** |  |
| **Nuclear treaties** |  |

***6. Annotate the following cartoons to explain their meaning. In each one decide whether each personality is presented in a good or bad light.***



British newspaper, 6th November 1962



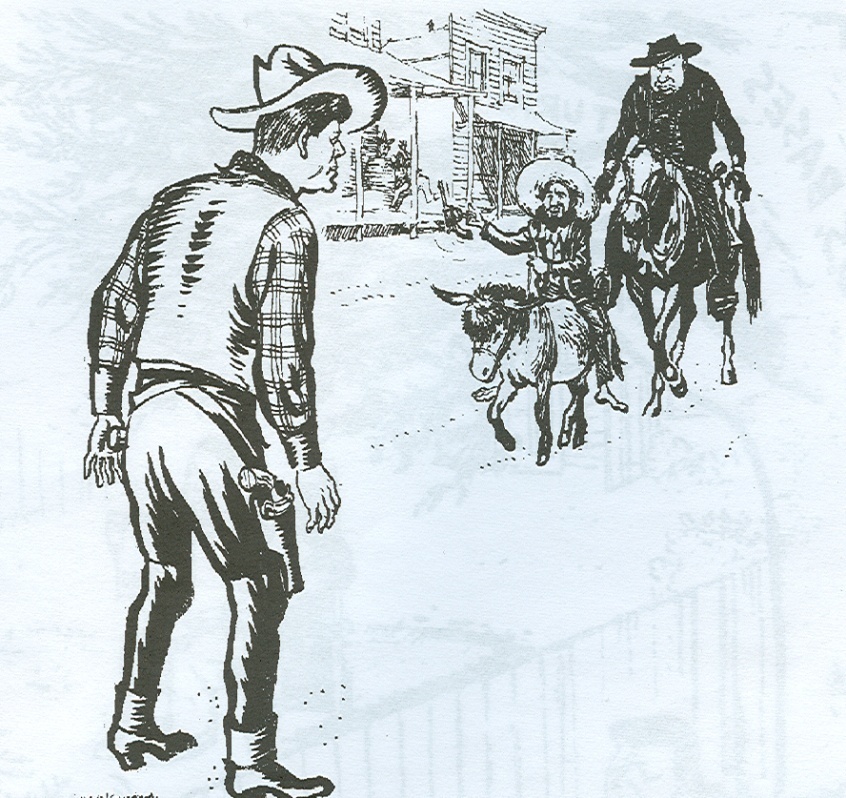
Cuban newspaper produced during the crisis.

The caption reads ‘New President. Same collar, but different person’



British magazine, 17th October 1962.

Both Kennedy and Khrushchev are reading a book called’ Hints on pruning’



British newspaper, 24th October 1962

**GCSE Overview Question:**

**Why did relations between the USA and the USSR change in the years 1949-62?**

**You may use the following information to help with your answer:**

1949 Formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

1955 Formation of the Warsaw Pact

1956 Hungarian Uprising

1962 Cuban Missile Crisis

**[15]**

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**The Prague Spring 1968**



**BBC Breaking News – 20th August 1968**

Dozens of people have been killed in a massive military clampdown in Czechoslovakia by five Warsaw Pact countries.

Several members of the liberal Czechoslovak leadership have been arrested, including Prime Minister Alexander Dubcek.

The Soviet news agency, Tass, claims "assistance" was requested by members of the Czechoslovak Government and Communist party leaders to fight "counter-revolutionary forces".

But in a secret radio address, Czechoslovak President Ludvik Svoboda condemned the occupation by Warsaw Pact allies as illegal and committed without the government's consent.

US President Lyndon Johnson said the invasion was a clear violation of the United Nations Charter and that the excuses offered by the Soviet Union were "patently contrived".

"It is a sad commentary on the communist mind that a sign of liberty in Czechoslovakia is deemed a fundamental threat to the security of the Soviet system," he said.

The Czechoslovak authorities have ordered their vastly outnumbered army not to fight and are appealing to the public for restraint.

Czechoslovakia's abortive path to freedom began when Mr Dubcek, a Slovak, became Communist Party leader in January.

A programme of wide-ranging democratic reforms had been gathering pace in the face of Soviet disapproval and the rebirth of social and political freedom became known as the "Prague Spring".

**Resistance**

In the capital of Prague today, crowds of people gathered in the streets chanting support for Mr Dubcek and imploring the foreign troops to go home.

Much of the resistance was centred around the Prague radio station. As the day progressed, Czechoslovak youths threw home-made missiles and even tried to take on Russian tanks.

Reports say some tanks and ammunition trucks were destroyed, but Soviet troops responded with machinegun and artillery fire and at least four people were shot dead.

In the Wenceslas and Old Town Squares, hundreds of youths made barricades out of overturned lorries to try and halt the advance.

Soviet and eastern block commanders have now imposed an overnight curfew and are threatening to shoot on sight anyone caught breaking it.

All rail, road and airline routes out of Czechoslovakia have been closed as troops continue to enter the country - now estimated to number nearly 175,000 men.

…… more to follow as we receive it…..

**Read Page 66- 67 of Waugh and Wright and complete the following diagram:**

**What were the ‘Prague Spring Reforms? Read page 68. Then add details of the reforms to the diagram which follows:**

Road to Invasion: Use pages 68-70 to complete this diagram. Add text and/or a diagram/symbol/picture boxes explaining the consequences of reform, Soviet Union concerns and features of the invasion. Plan very carefully indeed…..

**Read Pages 71-72. Prioritize the following consequences of the Soviet Invasion in the diagram below giving a reason for your choice.**

Consequences for:

1. Czechoslovakia b) Soviet Union c) Warsaw Pact d) Relations between USSR and USA e) Relations between USSR and China

**Justification:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_